

THE
Infidel Convicted: (4)

OR, A BRIEF

DEFENCE

OF THE

Christian Revelation.

IN WHICH

The Excellency of the CHRISTIAN MORALITY
is fully shewn, and the Consistency of
Revelation with human *Reason* proved.

Corroborated by Unanswerable ARGUMENTS from
Mr. LOCKE, on whose Writings many Persons
causlessly profess to build their Sceptical Notions.

And Address'd to the
Serious Consideration of the BRITISH YOUTH in general;
and in particular of such of the *Young Gentlemen* of the
Inns of Court, as are tainted with *Atheistical* or *Deistical*
Principles, but are not wholly given up to a Reprobate
Mind.

To which is added, by Way of Postscript,
A Pathetic LETTER from a Father on the Degeneracy of his Son;
and a Word of Advice in relation to the UNIVERSITIES.

Errare est hominis, sed non persistere —

L O N D O N:

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THE
HISTORICAL CONVENTION
OF A BRITISH
DELEGATION

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TO THE
 Young Gentlemen
 OF
 GREAT BRITAIN,
 And, particularly, To Those of the
 INNS of COURT
 In and about this Great
 METROPOLIS.



PERMIT me, I beseech ye, young Gentlemen, among the Crowd of Writers that have engag'd in the present important Controversy, to throw in among you, a little common Sense and plain Reasoning, in Behalf of Christianity, which may possibly affect the Minds of such of you as are not resolutely harden'd against all Conviction.

AS to the principal Leaders of the present Apostacy, I own I have not much Hopes that any thing I shall offer, will have Influence upon
 A *them.*

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them. They are Persons that seem to be given up to a Reprobate Mind, and their Pride, their Vanity, their Disappointments, their Love of Novelty, or their Gain, may operate so strongly upon them, as to secure them equally against the Possibility of Conviction, and of Repentance.

BUT for such as are only Smatterers in Infidelity, because it is a New Thing; who can have no Worldly Views to gratify by the new-fangled Impieties; who, whatever Loose they may give themselves at present, must, one Time or other, enter into the solid Parts of Living and of Thinking, and may possibly one Day think it Policy, at least, to attempt to keep their Families, Children, and Servants in Order by the sacred Ties of Religion and Piety: For such, I say, I am in some Hopes, that they may be made sensible, on due Reflection, of the Folly of jesting with edg'd Tools, of turning sacred Things into Ridicule, and playing with their Perdition, till it overtake them; till they are given up to a Reprobate Mind, and are thrown headlong, if not into a State of Despondency (for from that their want of Faith may secure them) into a State of final Impenitence.

*WHAT I have aim'd at in the following Sheets, is, to accommodate myself to the plainest Capacities, by easy and familiar Reasonings, without entering into the abstruser Points of Divinity; and as Mr. LOCKE is reckon'd upon
by*

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by some Persons, as the Corner-stone of the present Scepticism; and as a different Use has been doubtless made of his Writings, than he ever intended; I have, in the Course of the Argument, selected a few Paragraphs from that sublime Reasoner, in Vindication of Christianity; which I believe must have a better Effect from him, than from any other Author, as he was a Layman, and not to be suspected of Priestcraft; but, on the contrary, was known to be a strenuous Advocate for Reason, and Liberty of Thinking, and struck out more new and useful Lights in that Way, than any Author of his own, or any other Age.

THE Reason why I address myself not only to the British Youth in general, but particularly to You, Gentlemen, of the Inns of Court about this great City, is, because 'tis too justly to be apprehended, that many of you have taken a very deep Taint of this Infection of Infidelity; insomuch, that many of you affect servilely to repeat, at every Coffee-house Table where you frequent, to the great Offence of all sober Minds, the senseless Buffoonery and lewd Scoffs of the most virulent Apostate that has appear'd since the Time of the Emperor Julian: And it will be a very great Pleasure to me, if the Arguments contain'd in the subsequent Pages, may have the happy Effect to put any of you upon due Reflection; if they are able to confirm the doubting Minds of well-meaning Persons, who may have been shock'd by the bold

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Attacks that have been lately made on the Christian Religion, and to bring back any of you to the regular Paths, which conducted your Forefathers to the End of Life with Comfort and Happiness both to themselves and Families.

FOR, let me tell you, young Gentlemen, if your Fathers had given such a Loose to their fanciful Imaginations, as you, their wiser Sons, do, I know not whether the Influences it would have had on their Morals, would not (if you had had a Being at all) have given you, both as to Health and Circumstance, a much other-guise Situation, than that in which you now find yourselves.

'TIS hard to say where a Man may stop, that has brought himself to dispense with those sacred Tests of Religion and Good Manners, which ought to incompass and secure his Virtue. If once the proper Mounds or Boundaries, that are fix'd to with-hold the rapid Waves of Libertinism, come ever so little to be broken thro', the rushing Waters will quickly make themselves a larger Passage: They will impetuously bear down all Obstructions, and will soon overwhelm the fair Pasture of an innocent Mind.

YOU knew the Time yourselves, my dear Friends, when you were shock'd at those Impieties which now your bolder Minds glory in; and you cannot promise yourselves how far short

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of what you may now tremble at (supposing you not totally abandon'd) your present Depravity will lead you.

LET me tell you, Gentlemen, that even a Resolute Course of Piety, is an Up-hill Contention against the Delusions of our own Frailty and Partiality (for, in Complaisance to your present illuminated Tastes, I put the Devil quite out of the Case); No Wonder then, that we are precipitated Down-hill with a Vengeance when we give way to the Deceptions of a depraved Nature; and suffer our Imaginations to run away with our Discretion, as the Devils did with the Swine, till, like them, we are plung'd into the fathomless Abyss of Doubt and Uncertainty.

IT is excellently said, by an ingenious Author, "There is nothing more unreasonable than to neglect and despise plain and sufficient Evidence before us (and such I hope we shall produce in the following Sheets) and to sit down to imagine what kind of Evidence would have pleased us; and then to make the Want of such Evidence an Objection to the Truth; which yet, if well consider'd, would be found to be well establish'd." This is making our wild Fancies and vain Imaginations sit in Judgment upon Revelation, and to determine boldly upon it, as our changeable and erroneous Opinion, or perhaps our Conveniency or Appetite, which we

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we may nick-name Reason, at the Time suggests to us.

I say, At the Time ; for as positive as you may now be of the Strength of your Reason, it is far from being impossible that you may be hereafter convicted to a quite contrary Sentiment, which may put in as strong a Claim as your present Opinion does, to the Name of Reason ; and even then, you are not sure but you may be afterwards still farther illuminated, and induced to embrace a third Opinion different from both : So fallacious, so variable is what you call Reason ! and so unfit to be set up as an absolute Guide, in Opposition to the unerring and immutable Laws of the Gospel.

I WILL be bold therefore to pronounce, That the more you know, the less you'll doubt, or at least, the more modest you'll be ;--- if but for your own Sakes, lest you should live to change your Opinions ; for why should you believe your Reason is arriv'd at its full Maturity, and that it is so capacious, that it can comprehend every thing ? What Improvement have any of you made in Sciences of any kind, which you have made your particular Study, that should induce you to this extraordinary Opinion of your own finite Reasons and circumscrib'd Understandings ?

ARE there not in the Heavens, in the Earth, in the Air, and in the Waters, innumerable

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merable and incomprehensible Wonders, far beyond the Capacity of the clearest and most illuminated Minds to account for by feeble Reason? Will you therefore deny the Evidence of your Senses, to the Existence of such Wonders, because they are beyond your Comprehension?

WHAT surprizing Discoveries have been of late Years made in Science by Sir ISAAC NEWTON, and others! But because most of those Discoveries are Demonstrations only to the Learned Few, must the Generality of the World, (who can neither conceive nor comprehend them) reject them as unworthy of their Belief, for no other Cause than that they are not demonstrable to their weak Reason?

TO descend still lower: How often, even in common Acquirements, which we master by Application only, and which require no great Force of Genius to attain, do we at the Beginning wonder at, and think next to impracticable, those Things, which afterwards become so easy and pleasant to us, that we are surprized that we should ever have thought them difficult?

HOW much less then are the Mysteries of Religion, and those Divine Truths which GOD has not thought fit to submit to the fallible Reason of short-sighted Man, to be rejected, because we cannot account for them, and bring them down to the Level of our weak Understandings?

AFTER

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AFTER all, I am far from inclining to inculcate such Principles as may lead to an enormous Faith: On the contrary, I think, that a modest and well-regulated Reason is the glorious Privilege of Human Nature; and 'tis the principal Design of these Sheets to prove, That such a Reason is consistent with Revelation, and that Morality and the Law of Nature are so far from being oppugned by the Gospel Dispensation, that they are exalted and made perfect by it.

PERMIT me farther to observe, That as in every Science, the plainest Things are the most useful, so it has pleased GOD to order it, that in the Christian Revelation, all that is necessary for us to know, for the promoting of our Happiness both Here and Hereafter, lies in a small and easy Compass, and intirely within the Reach of our natural Reason. To what Purpose then have we had so much Bustle made by so many learned Pens, who have set the World in an Uproar, about little more than mere Words, and have disputed so long, that the Practical Part, the Essence of Religion, has been well near lost in the Cloud of Dust they have raised about the Speculative?

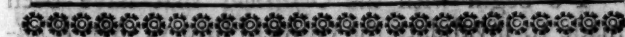
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the Subject, we will humbly touch upon the principal Objections which have been made against



Article of the Christian Faith, on which all the rest depend. And since we shall bring undeniable Arguments, as we have said, to prove, that Reason is not inconsistent with

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THE Arguments that have been of late produced against Christianity, are far from being *New*, except as to the indecent Manner in which they have been reviv'd. This indeed must be confess'd to be *intirely New*, and seems reserv'd for the Apostates of the *present Age*: While some bold Minds have revived the Doctrines of *Arius*, another has gone beyond *Julian* the Apostate Emperor, in his Insults on the Holy *Jesus*; and the most absurd of the *Heathen Systems* of Religion was never treated in so shocking, so ungentlemanly, so scurrilous a Manner, as the *Gospel of Christ*. As to the rest, the Arguments of late produc'd by the Adversaries to the Christian Faith, are but a Collection of the old *exploded* (and as often *refuted as revived*) Doctrines of the Heretics of past Ages.

BUT for the Sake of such of our Readers, as may not have *Leisure* or *Opportunity* to peruse what has been publish'd of most Importance on

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this

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this Subject, we will summarily touch upon the principal *Objections* which have been made against the *Gospel*, and against the *Resurrection* of our Saviour, which is the Point the Infidels have levelled all their Artillery against, and is the fundamental Article of the Christian Faith, on which all the rest depend. And afterwards we shall bring undeniable Arguments, as we hope, in Defence of Christianity, and to prove, that *Reason* is not inconsistent with *Revelation*; and lastly, produce Evidences, as well from *Pagan* as other Authorities, to prove the Truth of the Christian Dispensation.

To begin with the *Objections* that have been made to invalidate the Gospel History, Mr. *Woolston*, asserts (p. 65.) "That the Four Gospels are, in no Part, a *literal* Story; but a System of * *Mystical* Philosophy, or Theology: That the History of *Jesus's* Life, as recorded by the Evangelists, is an *Emblematical* Representation of his *Spiritual* Life in the *Soul* of Man; and his *continued Miracles*, *Figures* of his more *mysterious Operations*."

THE following impious Paragraph will shew the *Consistency* of this Scoffer, if compar'd with the above; for here he treats those Gospels, not as a System of *Mystical Theology*, but as a vile *Cheat* and *Imposture*.

"BUT in the Matter of his working *Miracles* (says he, *Disc. 6. p. 7.*) they [the Evangelists] seem to *oustretch* one another. *Matthew*, indeed, is a little sparing and modest in his Ro-

* Ought not this to be sufficient, if it were only so, to exempt this System from the blasphemous Insults with which he treats it, throughout his impious Discourses?

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“*mance*: But *Luke* perceiving the Insufficiency
“ of his *Tale*, *devises* a Miracle of a bigger Size :
“ And yet this being thought insufficient still,
“ *St. John*, rather than his Prophet’s Honour
“ should fail for want of his Assistance, *forges* a
“ monstrously huge one. — For indeed, (*says*
“ *he*, *Disc.* 3. *p.* 49.) they do not endeavour so
“ much as to *lye with a Grace* ; nor take they any
“ Pains to make their *Stories* hang together,”

WHAT are these *Romances*, these *Tales*, these
Stories which are *devis’d* and *forg’d* by the Evan-
gelists? Why, no less, as he says above, than
their *four Gospels*, which, in the same Pieces, he
declares to be a System of *Mystical Theology*, and a
Representation of the *Spiritual Life* of *Jesus* in the
Soul of Man ; — and so are to be made the
Subject of his shameless Buffoonery, and virulent
Scoffs !

BUT nothing can be more weak and contemp-
tible, than this pretended *Allegorical* Meaning of
the Gospel. Can *Mystical* Miracles, and the Cure
of *Spiritual* Diseases, be judg’d of by human *Eyes*
and *Understandings* ? *Obvious* Miracles carry with
them a *strong* and *irresistable* Conviction ; but how
shall we know, that a blind, or a lame, or a
leprous *Mind* be cur’d ? ’Tis apparently a *Miracle*,
to see a lame Man, at a Word speaking, take up
his Bed and walk ; a blind Man wondring himself,
and inspiring every one with Wonder, who knew
him before, and saw him, before their *Eyes*, re-
stor’d to Sight ; a leprous Man instantly cleans’d,
the Sick restor’d, the Dead raised : These are
convincing Miracles, *Miracles* obvious to *common*
Sense, and which *common Understandings* can judge
of ; and these made the amazed Spectators glo-
rify the God of *Israel*, and say, *This is of a truth*

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the Prophet that should come into the World. Well might this Testimony be extorted, on the Sight of such Wonders, from even the Enemies of his Doctrine, *That this Jesus was a Man approved of God by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the midst of all the People.*

BUT pray let me ask any of you, Gentlemen, who are Favourers of Mr. *Woolston's* Infidelity, how it would have appeared, even to your own more illuminated Understandings, that any of these Cures *Spiritualized* had been wrought in the *Minds* of Men, so as to have convinc'd you, that the crippled *Understanding* was made to walk; that the Eyes of the Blind in *Heart* were open'd, and that the Dead and Buried *Lazarus* was an *Allegorical* Tale of a Man dead and buried in *Sin*?

AND tell me, I beseech ye, how ye will make the Reference of our Saviour to the *common Senses* of John's Disciples, *allegorical* and *mystical*? *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another Saviour, say they? Go your Way,* reply'd he, and tell John *what Things you have SEEN and heard; how the Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised, the Poor have the Gospel preached unto them, &c.*

WHAT had these Disciples of John SEEN? Why, according to *Woolston*, they had seen no *Literal Miracles*; but they had found a Way to look into the *Understandings* and *Minds* of Men, and beheld wrought in them, a sincere and thorough Reformation: Instead of a *Literal* Resurrection from the Dead, they had seen a Man, and that no *Profligate*, or Person of ill Character, or bad Life or Morals, raised from the Death of Sin, to the Life of Righteousness: which, by the Way, could

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could not be demonstrated by *immediate Effects*; but must have the Sanction of all his *future Life*, to the last Catastrophe thereof, to verify, and then might, for what they knew, be attended with *inward Insincerity*, and *Hypocrisy*. Where was the *Miracle* of this? or, at least, where was the *Efficacy* of it, to the Spectators on the *Spot*? How could these Performances, which must be *invisible* ones, and not free from *Sceptical Objections*, be said, in *any Sense*, to be SEEN by the People, who *immediately* on the *Spot*, gave Glory to God, and look'd upon them as so many Proofs of the Divine Mission of the Performer?

A VERY little *common Sense* taken into this Part of your *Credenda*, would give you a different Turn of Thinking: But if, against all Conviction, you are determin'd to persist, you had better, when the Argument pinches, throw of *all* Scripture-Authority at once: Reject the *whole Canon*; the *Old*, as well as the *New Testament*, because there is among the Prophets sufficient to stagger your Infidelity; and thus, having rejected *Moses* and the *Prophets*, *Jesus*, and his *Apostles*, fix the Foundation of your Faith upon *Woolston*, and see what you'll profit by the Change: For a *Blind Faith* most of you * must have, and place *somewhere*: for how few of you are able to judge for yourselves, with all your boasted *Reason*? So that even your very *Infidelity* will take its Rise, unawares to yourselves, from the *Enormity* of your Faith on those who profess themselves to be *Enemies* of all Faith, but what they repose in their own *Self-Conceit* and *Presumption*. So that, after

* "The greatest Part cannot know, and therefore they must believe." LOCKE *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Vol. II. P. 535. Vol. Edit.

all,

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all, you will find, that you have not renounc'd in *Practice* that *Faith*, which you ridicule in *Words*: You have only made a *Transposition* of your Faith from the *best* Authorities to the *worst*, or rather to *none* at all.

BUT what will your Leaders think of their senseless Ridicule, when they are reminded, that even their very *Blasphemy* and *lewd Baniers* on the Christian System, are a strong Proof of the Truth of that Dispensation which they are so resolutely bent to deny; and that *THEY* are the abandon'd Wretches who single out themselves for the Completion of a Prophecy of *St. Peter* (2 Ep. iii. 3.) *That there shall come in the last Days SCOFFERS?*

THIS must be as shocking a Thought for a reflecting Infidel (if there can be such a Person) to think himself of this abandon'd Number; as it is a singular Mark of the *Power* of that *all-wise Being*, who can turn even the *Vices* and *Follies* of Men to his own Glory, and make the very *Apostates* who *deride* all *Revealed Religion*, Examples of the *Truth* of it, even in the very *Act* of their *Denial*.

THUS much for the contemptible Notion of *Allegorical Miracles*. Let us now from the *Tenor* of the Christian Doctrines, and the *Success* they met with, notwithstanding the utmost *Disadvantages*, and *Opposition*, attempt a Proof of their Divine Original.

OF all the Systems of Religion that ever appeared, Christianity was the *least* adapted to the *Passions* and *Appetites* of Men; being founded on *Self-Denial* and *Suffering*, the hardest Lessons of all others to Mankind; and had it not been supported

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ported by the irresistible Convictions that were wrought in Mens Minds by the *Miracles* of the *Blessed Founder* of it, and his *Disciples*, what, humanly speaking, could have procur'd it the amazing Success that it was attended with?

'Tis true, the apparent *Disinterestedness* of its Divine Propagator, and of his Disciples, who were to encounter so many *Difficulties* and *Oppositions*, and who were to be *persecuted*, *oppressed*, and finally put to *cruel Deaths* for the Sake of it, could not but have a great Influence on *unprejudic'd* Minds: For what worldly Grandeur or temporary Ends could Christ have by his Doctrine of *Self-Denial*? Of *Mortification*? Of *Poverty*? Of *Contempt*? Was it a *Temporal Kingdom*? Would he then, as an excellent * Author, with great Beauty, Strength, and Clearness, intimates, have set up a Doctrine that run counter to all the Expectations and darling Hopes of the Nation he desir'd to reign over? ——— “ The People expected a *victorious Prince*; he told them they were *mistaken*: They held as sacred the *Traditions* of the Elders; he told them, those *Traditions* made the Law of God of *none Effect*: They valued themselves for being the *peculiar People* of God; he told them, that People from *all Quarters* of the World should be the *People of God*, and sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* in the Kingdom: They thought God could be worshipp'd *only* at *Jerusalem*; he told them God might and should be worshipped *every where*: They were superstitious in the *Observance* of the *Sabbath*; he, according to their Reckoning, *broke* it frequently. In a Word,

* Tryal of the Witnesses.

“ their

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“ their *Washings* of Hands and Pots, their *superstitious Distinctions* of Meats, their *Prayers* in Publick, their *Villainies* in secret, were all re-
 “ proved, exposed, and condemned by him, and
 “ the Cry ran strongly against him, that he
 “ came to *destroy* the Law and the *Prophets*. —
 “ And therefore what could tempt him but purely
 “ a Regard to *Truth*, to take upon himself *so many*
 “ Difficulties, which might have been avoided,
 “ could he have been but *silent*, as to the *Old*
 “ *Revelation*, and left the People to their *Ima-*
 “ *ginations* ? ”

NOTHING, then, but the *Truth* and *Excel-*
lency of the Doctrines he taught, supported by the
Disinterestedness of the Founder, and the *Miracles*
 he wrought, could have carry'd a Doctrine so *con-*
trary to the *Expectations* of the People, thro' so
 many amazing *Oppositions*.

As to the particular *Miracles* of our Blessed Sa-
 viour, they have been so well vindicated by other
 Authors, that we shall * refer to them, and proceed
 to that Part of our Undertaking, which leads us
 to vindicate the Doctrine of Christ's *Resurrection*,
 which, as we have observ'd, is the Grand Basis
 and Support of all the rest, and against which
 the Infidels have exerted their utmost Strength.

“ CHRIST Jesus, says the above † Author, de-
 “ clared himself a *Prophet*, and put the *Proof* of
 “ his *Mission* on this, That he should die openly
 “ and publicly, and rise again the *Third Day*.
 “ This surely, adds he, was the hardest Plot in

* Vide Tryal of the Witnesses; Dr. Pearce; and others.

† Tryal of the Witnesses.

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“ the World to be manag’d : And if there be
 “ one *Instance* of this Kind, or in any Degree like
 “ it, by all Means let it be produc’d. ” And
 again, “ One would naturally think (*says he,*
 “ p. 30.) that the *fore-telling* his Resurrection,
 “ and giving such *Public Notice* to expect it,
 “ that his keenest Enemies were fully apprized of
 “ it, carried with it the *greatest Mark of sincere*
 “ *Dealing.* ”

AND indeed, this *open* and *public* Declaration did not a little alarm his Adversaries the Priests and Elders of the *Jews* ; and they set themselves to work, by all the Means they could devise, to prevent the Effect of it. They applyed to the *Roman Governor* for a Guard to watch the Body till the Time was expir’d in which he had declared he would rise again, and used all imaginable Precautions to frustrate the Prophecy, lest, as they said to *Pilate*, *his Disciples should steal him away by Night*, and so the last Error should be worse than the first.

BUT why were the Jewish Priests so *solicitous* to secure the Tomb where the Body of *Jesus* was interr’d ? Why did they procure a Guard of *Roman Soldiers* from *Pilate* ? why seal the Door of the Sepulchre, lest, as they pretended, the Body should be stolen away ? No doubt they were apprehensive of the *Truth* of his *Prediction* that he should rise again, and that he that could raise *others*, was able to raise *himself* : And what could make them thus apprehensive, but the many *Miracles* he perform’d in his Life, which gave Credit to this, as they would otherwise have thought, improbable Prediction ?

HAD any of the *Public Miracles* of Christ been disprov'd: Had he failed in his Professions or his Attempts to cure the *Paralytic*, to give Sight to the *Blind*, or Hearing to the *Deaf*, or Life to the *Dead*, as in the Case of *Jairus's Daughter*, the *Widow's Son*, and *Lazarus*, would he not have been made the Public Scorn and Derision? Would he have dared (the *Repugnancy* of his Doctrine to the *Expectation* and *Genius* of the *Jewish Nation*, especially considered) to shew himself abroad? Would his Prophecy have been so much attended to, as to awaken the jealous Rage or blinded Malice of the *Jewish Rulers*, or the Apprehensions of the *Roman Governor*? Had he not himself, in that Case done their own Work for them, and destroy'd, to all Intents and Purposes, his own Reputation? Who believ'd, in our Day, the *French Prophets*, after their Pretences to raise Dr. *Emms* were detected? Did not this destroy those Enthusiasts all at once? Did they not from that time become the Scorn and Derision of the Populace? and were they not afterwards forced to skulk about in Corners, till they were finally dispersed, and dissipated?

WOULD not the *Jewish Rulers* have objected to our Saviour on his Tryal, if he had failed in his miraculous Undertakings, his *Public Frauds* and *Impostures*, instead of accusing him to *Pilate* of a Design to destroy their Temple, of Blaspheming God, and of subverting their Law? They were so far from this, that even their *public* and *most plausible* Pretence for conspiring to take him off, most evidently demonstrates the Force of their *Conviction* and of their *Malice* at the same Time, and also the *Reality* of his *Miracles*; since they
 appre-

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apprehended no less, than that the People by reason of those *Miracles*, would revolt in his Favour, and thereby induce the *Romans* to take away both their *Place* and *Nation*.

As to the Pretence of the Guards, that the Body was *stollen* while they were *asleep*; If they were *asleep*, as it has by other Writers, with great Significancy, been asked, How came they to be able to relate *so punctually* what happened then? How *critical* must be this Theft? How strange was it, that *all* the Guards should be *asleep* at *one Time*; and that so *profoundly*, that a *great Stone* should be rolled from the Door of the Sepulchre, that was set there to secure it, the *Seals* broken, the *Tomb* opened, the *Body* taken out, the *Burial-Cloaths* taken off, and laid in order by the Side thereof: That they should, *after this*, carry out the dead Body by the *Way they came*, and perhaps *over the sleeping Soldiers*, who 'tis likely, had dispersed themselves in different Parts of the Avenue. Here was a *critical* Juncture to hit! For could the Disciples tell, that the Soldiers would be all *asleep*, and that so *fast asleep*, at the *very Time* they were met to perpetrate the Theft? Could they *hope* for such an Opportunity? Durst they have been seen loitering about the Sepulchre before these Soldiers fell *asleep*, who no doubt were, (if but for the Sake of the *Air*, of *Diversion*, of *shifting the Scene*) often *looking out* into the *open Country* before the Cave, and must have seen them, if they had been lurking thereabouts? And if they had discovered any of the Disciples about the Place, or near it, would it not have given a Suspicion that would have set the Soldiers still more upon their Guard?

So then, those Disciples, those *intimidated* and *dispersed* Disciples, who durst not shew their Heads

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in *Public*, one of whom, in *Fear*, had just before, most remarkably *denied his Master*, must secretly go from the City to the Cave, without being discovered by a *single Soul*, and there they must find a *whole Band* of Soldiers set to watch *purposely* against them, *every Man* asleep; yea, as above, so *profoundly asleep*, that a Work which required divers *Actors*, great *Strength*, some *Time*, and could not be possibly done without *Noise*, and perhaps, as far as we know, the Soldiers sitting at the *very Door* of the Cave: Yet, under all these Difficulties, they should be able to *steal away* the Body, return back *with it* to the City, or to some *remote Place*, where it was *never heard of* as a Corpse: All these Things considered, I see not how these *Miracle-bating* Gentlemen, can account for such a *propitious Juncture*, and for the *Success* of so *hardy an Undertaking*, without having Recourse to a *Miracle*, in Spite of their very *Infidelity*.

WE shall only observe, on this Article of the *Resurrection*, one Thing more. Mr. *Woolston* thinks it a great Pity, that the Books antiently written against *Jesus*, are lost, because they would have given an *Insight*, as he says, into the *whole Contrivance* of his *Resurrection*.

IF there ever were such Books, which is more than he knows, is it not more than probable, that they were *sufficiently confuted*, or else that the *Christian Religion* would not have been able to have made such an *amazing Progress*, as it did, when it was preached only by such *mean and illiterate Persons*, against the *Learning*, the *Policy*, and the *Power* of this World?

WE will venture to add, That perhaps that *very Progress*, considering the *Obstructions* and *Discouragements*

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couragements the Gospel met with, and the *despised Conditions and Capacities* of its *first Propagators*, was as great a *Miracle*, and *Instance* of a *supernatural Influence*, as *those* disputed by the Infidels of the present Age ; and which they would have equal Difficulty to account for by the Measure of their *boasted Reason* ; and would be as ready to doubt the Truth of it, if they were not obliged by its manifest and apparent *Consequences* to yield their Assent to it.

ONE Thing more, we will venture to say, will no less puzzle them to account for in *their Way* ; — 'Tis demonstrable, that many of the *Prophecies* of our Saviour and his *Disciples*, were extant, and the Records thereof in *every one's Hands*, long before their Completion ; and yet every one of them has been *literally* fulfilled since. Of this, the *Destruction of Jerusalem* and of the *Temple*, and the unparell'd *Dispersion of the Jews*, are flagrant Instances, which stand in full and unquestionable Proof to this Day.

WE must leave it to the *wilful* Sceptics still to doubt on ; but hope, that what we have observ'd, superadded to the plain Matter of Fact, as related by the Evangelists, will have some Weight to confirm *more ingenuous* Minds in the Belief of the Resurrection of our Saviour, according to the *Gospel Narrative*, and inspire them with a due Contempt of those vile Sophistries which are used to shake the Foundations of the Christian Faith, and to plunge honest Minds into the unfathomable Ocean of *Doubt and Uncertainty*.

THE great and avow'd View of the *Deists* and *Sceptics* in their *Attacks* upon *Reveal'd Religion*,

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gion, is to free the Minds of Men from those *Re-straints*, which the Christian Religion imposes upon their *sensual Appetites*, and from the *uneasy Apprehensions* of a *future Account* and *Retribution*. The *Two shocking Letters* from a *Deist* to his *Friend*, lately published, which were found in the *Escritoire* of that unhappy *Friend*, after he had made away with himself, in order to experience the *Truth* of a *future State*, sufficiently expose the *iniquitous Design* of this Set of Men; and the *Observations* made thereupon, printed with them, are so excellent, that we shall content ourselves to refer to them.

IF this be the Case, that these Men would let us loose to our *Pleasures*, and free us from the *Apprehensions* of a *future Account*, what *Security* can *Society* have either of their *Honesty*, or of their *Conformity* to those *Laws* which preserve *Order* among Men, and hinder the World from falling into *Confusion*? Will such Persons boggle at the most *irregular Attempts*, which they think conducive to their *present Pleasures*, and are persuaded of an *Impunity* for? Will not such Persons find, that even the *Laws* of mere *Morality* are repugnant to those *Pleasures*; and can there be any Assurance, that Persons so *professedly* abandon'd to their *sensual Appetites*, will be with-held by the *Laws* of *Society*, much less by a *Sense* of *Moral Duty*, which they themselves, under the *Dominion* of their *partial Passions*, are to be the *Judges* of?

OR if we could suppose these *Laws* might be a *sufficient* *Restraint* upon the *Minds* of some of the *Leaders* of the present *Scepticism*, and that *THEY* might be allowed to be *Moral Men*; how will they answer for it, that the *Multitude* will be with-held by the same *Considerations*? I doubt it

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it will be found, that, when these hopeful Doctrines are spread among the *ungovernable Many*, and that the *Generality* of Mankind come once to be persuaded, that they have Nothing but their *present Pleasures* to pursue, and have no *future Account* to dread, they will not stick at any Thing that their irregular Appetites may suggest to them as *Pleasures*? And then the *Plunderers* of the Road and of the Seas, the *Robbers* of the Street, the *sly Thief*, and the *bold Felon* or *Burglar*, may in Time, become *innocent* Appellations, in Comparison of the more *diffus'd* Wickedness, which may then be spread among us: Of which the dreadful Practices of the *Bristol Incendiaries* are a shocking Example: And which, I doubt, are to be attributed, in great measure, to that *loose* and *dissolute Liberty* of late so zealously contended for, and to those *strange Contempts* which have been *fashionable* with some People to put upon *all Religion*. — But be this as it will, can the Scheme of Religion which these Men would propagate, and which must necessarily be attended with very bad Effects in *weak* or *disorderly* Minds, be a *fit* Scheme for the *ungovernable Vulgar*, the *great Majority* of Mankind, who are to be kept in Awe only by the prevailing Passions of *Fear* and *Hope*?

IT will be allow'd me, that there are very few, who are fit to be trusted to the Dictates of *their own Reason*. And let our present Sceptics begin with their own *Families*, if they have any, and first free their *Children* and *Servants* from the *uneasy Restraints* that a *future Reckoning* lays upon them, and by their Conduct, when set *free*, as they call it, let them judge how much the *Multitude* would be benefited by the *Liberty* they contend to give them.

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BUT after all, what is this *Liberty of Free-thinking* they so much talk of? What beneficial *Consequences* can it be attended with to the *Minds or Consciences* of Men? — Can it have any other Effect, than to make Men *still greater Sceptics*, and *still more* subject to the uneasy Influences of *wavering Doubts* and *melancholy Apprehensions*?

THESE cunning Sophisters would rob Mankind of the most comfortable *Hope*, and even *Assurance*, which Revelation gives them, of a *Blessed Futurity*, which will reward their *Sufferings*; their *Sorrows*, and their *Piety* in *this Life*, and encourage them to meet *Death* with *joyful Hopes* of a better: And what would they give them in *Lieu* of this *pleasing Hope*? Why, they would turn them loose into the *wide Sea* of *fluctuating Doubt*; they would dash all their *Comforts* with *Gall* and *Bitterness*; and when they have done all, they will never be able to free them *wholly* from that *cruel Uncertainty*, which at times will fill their *Minds*, especially in *Pain* or *Sickness*, with *unspeakable Anguish*. An unhappy Instance of this may be produc'd in the poor Gentleman we hinted at above, who could not support Life under the *uneasy Burden* of those *Doubts* and *Apprehensions* which his *Deistical Friend* (or rather *Enemy*) had planted in his *Mind*, and therefore plung'd himself *headlong* into the *Gulph* of *Eternity*, to be rid of that *terrible Incertitude* which was become intolerable to him.

25 If it be objected, that some of these Gentlemen are, as we may say, *involuntary Sceptics*; that they have some unhappy *Doubts* upon their *Minds* which they would be *glad* to overcome, but *cannot*: I answer, that this cannot be the Case of such as
set

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set themselves down to *write*, and to *confirm themselves* in their Scepticism; much less of such who *publish*, and endeavour to *propagate* their *Doubts*. A *Modest* and a *Good* Man, will *keep to himself* those Tenets which he would be glad to *part with* upon being convinced of the *Falacy* of them, and which he thinks will shock other Persons, or make *them* as uneasy as *himself*. He would propose his *Doubts* in *private* to such Persons as he conceiv'd had *Ability* to *satisfy* 'em, and would, with an *unprejudic'd Mind*, read such *Works* as he might be most likely to receive *Satisfaction* from: And if, after all, he could not submit his *Reason* to the *Opinion* of others, and receive the hop'd-for *Conviction*, he would not apply himself by *Writing* to fill other *Minds* with those *Scruples*, which, but for *him*, they would *never* have known.

THE late Mr. Collins once told a Friend of mine, who represented to him, that it was most eligible, even if there should prove to be *no future Reckoning*, to *live* in a full *Expectation* of one; for that a *Disappointment* of *one Hand*, would be of *no bad Consequence*; but of the *other*, most *pernicious* and *dreadful*: I say, he told the Gentleman in Answer to this, *That he would give all the World to be able to think as he did*. And *Charity* would have induc'd one to hope that Mr. Collins was *sincere* in this Declaration, had he not endeavour'd zealously to *propagate* his *Doubts*, and had he not, without being able to produce for his *Opinions* an *absolute*, or even a *moral Certainty*, endeavour'd also to inculcate into the *Minds* of Men of *less Abilities*, who would *otherwise* have been *easy* in their *Faith* and *Principles*, those *Uncertainties* which must have been, at times, *disturbing to his own Repose*.

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THE Example of Mr. LOCKE would much better become such Gentlemen. This great Man made the *Love of Truth* and the *Search* after it; the Grand Motive of all his *Enquiries*: He was so very cautious of shaking *Fundamentals*, that, on the *strictest* and most *impartial* Enquiry, being convinc'd of their *Truth*, he set himself to *defend* them, and was so far from harbouring an *over-weening* Conceit of his own Abilities, great as they were, that he wish'd for nothing more than to be convinc'd of his supposed Errors; and the following short *Preface* to his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, ought for ever to stand upon Record as a *Monument* of his *Modesty* and *Sincerity*, as it ought to have procured him better *Quarter* than he met with from some fiery Zealots of his *Time*, on Occasion of that very Piece.

“ The little Satisfaction and Consistency, says
 “ he, that is to be found in most of the Systems
 “ of Divinity I have met with, made me betake
 “ myself to the *sole Reading of the Scripture* (to
 “ which they all appeal) for the Understanding the
 “ *Christian Religion*.

“ WHAT from thence, by an *attentive* and
 “ *unbias'd* Search, I have received, Reader, I here
 “ deliver to thee. If by this my Labour thou
 “ receivest any *Light* or *Confirmation* in the *Truth*,
 “ join with me in Thanks to the *Father of Lights*
 “ for his *Condescension* to our *Understandings*.

“ IF, upon a *fair* and *unprejudiced Examination*,
 “ thou findest I have *mistaken* the *Sense* and *Tenor*
 “ of the *Gospel*, I beseech thee, as a *true Christian*,
 “ in the *Spirit of the Gospel* (which is that of *Charity*)
 and

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“ and in the *Words of Sobriety*, set me right in the
“ *Doctrine of Salvation.* ”

HERE is the true Picture of a *sincere* and *unprejudic'd* Spirit ! How different is this Instance from those given us by the *Sceptics* of the *present Age* ! I would recommend this *shining Example* to the Imitation of such as would be *glad* to be convinc'd. It would be in vain perhaps to hope it would influence *any others* : For as to such as, by the Help of their *Presumption* and *Conceit*, have persuaded themselves that they are in the *right*, and have the *Vanity* to believe all other Men in the *wrong*, such will undoubtedly *write*, and endeavour to *propagate* their Notions, and of course disclaim any Pretension to the *modest Hope* of Conviction to a *contrary Sentiment* : Such must be argued with on another Foot, as a *Wh—n* or as a *W—ston*, i. e. as thorough-principled Men, the first in *Enthusiasm* and *Conceit*, the Second in downright *Impiety* and *Apostacy* ; and then a * *Godalmin Imposition* may become as much the Subject of the *Belief* of the *one*, as the *Miracles* of *Jesus*, the *Ridicule* of the *other*.

IF it be said, That we have drawn some of our Arguments from *Political* Motives ; And we are of Opinion (say some of these forward Spirits) that Religion is nothing more than *Policy* to keep

* If the Story of the Rabbit-Woman of *Godalmin*, had not been obviated as it was by the Diligence of the *Civil Magistrates*, Mr. *Wh—n*, as we are assured, would have favoured the Public with a *Proof*, that her monstrous Productions were *foretold*, many Centuries ago in the Book of *Ezra*. Such Force has the Spirit of *Enthusiasm* over even *ingenious Minds* given up to it ; and to apt are such People as have renounced the only proper Standard of *Faith*, in Favour of their own *vain Conceits*, to be carried away by every Delusion ?

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in Awe *weak Minds*: Suppose it were even as they say, is not this a *sufficient* Argument to inspire us with a due Reverence for Religion?

SUPPOSING such Objectors to be as wise Men in *Reality*, as in their own *Conceits*, do they not think that the *Majority* of Mankind is greatly unfit to be left *at large* in this Respect? What-ever be the Scheme that any of these Gentlemen would propagate, can they be insensible of the Mischief that their shocking of *settled Foundations* must be attended with? How many Persons of *weak Minds*, when they come to be persuaded that they have been imposed on, in the Religion they have been *educated* in, will be brought into an ill Opinion of Religion in *general*, and having lost the *Anchor-hold* of their *Faith*, will be *driven about with every Wind of Doctrine*? What Security can there be, that *Morality* only will hold the Minds of Men, to the proper Observance even of the *Social Duties* of Life, when both *that* and the *Ties of Religion* joined together, are not sufficient to stem the Torrent of Vice and Immorality that is broken in upon us?

LET the *Morals* and *Behaviour* of those Persons who are the lewd *Followers* and *Espousers* of these irreligious Opinions, and who set up for the *Law of Nature*, and for *Morality*, against *Revelation*, be appealed to for the Benefits that are likely to accrue to the *Generality* from the Infidel Schemes endeavour'd to be propagated.

BUT why do I say *Schemes*, when the Broachers of the new-fangled Notions seem not to aim at any? When they seem to have no other Point in View, but to *unbinge* the *settled Frame* of Things, to confound all Manner of *Rule* and *Order*, to *pull down* without

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without attempting to *build up*, and so to involve every thing in *Confusion*? But were these Men to propose a Scheme of their *own*, let us, by what we have *seen* of their *Performances* and *Attainments*, judge of their *Capacities* for erecting a *new System*, fit to be set up in Opposition to that of *Jesus* and his *Apostles*, which has had the Sanction of the *greatest Wits* and *Genius's*, and the *best Men* of *all Ages*, for upwards of 1600 Years, till the prophane Scoffers of *Yesterday* arose to controvert it, and that not by *Arguments*, but by senseless and barbarous *Ridicule*,

BUT let us ask these pretended Advocates for *Morality* and *Reason*, in Opposition to *Revelation*, Whether there ever *was*, or *can be*, a *more complete* *Morality* than the *Gospel* affords us? What is it, then, that they mean, when they talk of their *Morality*, and their *Laws of Nature*? We shall in the Sequel of this Treatise produce some Arguments on this Head from the Great Mr. *Locke* that will be exceedingly apposite to this Purpose; but we cannot help anticipating our Intention, in citing his Opinion on this Subject, on an Occasion so remarkable, that it adds *Strength* to his *Judgment*.

We shall, however, first observe, that 'tis possible that Reasons of *Prudence* or *Convenience*, which generally are suppos'd to mean the same thing, may prevail upon a Man, though not to *disguise*, yet to give the *best Side* of his Sentiments, if he be never so sincere. *Good Manners* and *Modesty* will oblige somewhat to this Conduct, to avoid shocking our more *scrupulous Friends*, in declaring ourselves on *dubious Points*, about which they may have a *different Persuasion*; a Regard that must be acknowledg'd to have had very *little*,

if

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if any, Weight with our present *Sceptics* ; but which, nevertheless, is the *Duty* of one Man to another, in every *Circumstance* of Life, and in which a Man of any *Delicacy* at all, will not be wanting.

BUT when we write to a *Friend*, to an *intimate* Friend, who is intirely of the *same Opinion* with us, and much more when we write to a Friend, who, from his high Opinion of us, is willing to take his Measures from us ; we then throw off all Reserves ; we unbosom ourselves to him. To such a one, we *speak*, if *present* ; we *write*, if *absent* ; we *act*, in both Cases, with that noble, that undisguised Freedom, (knowing, that 'tis in *Confidence*, and that we have the Benefit even of his *Prejudice in our Favour*) that we then utter our *inmost Sentiments*, and hardly think ourselves oblig'd to observe any of those *common Guards*, which the World deems *Prudential* : For even our very *Failings*, if not too gross, have their *Beauties* in a *cordial Friendship*, or at least carry with them very strong and partial *Allowances* : Which puts me in mind of those excellent Lines of one Friend on the Writings of another :

*I read thee over, with a Lover's Eye ;
Thou hast no Faults ; or I no Faults can spy ;
Thou art all Beauty ; or all Blindness I.*

For this Reason, the *private Letters* of Great Men to their *intimate Friends*, as they speak the *inmost Sentiments* of the Heart, are certainly the most *faithful* and most *valuable* Repositories of their Sentiments, and are often more to be depended on than their more *elaborate* Works, which they calculate for the Perusal of *Enemies* as well as *Friends*.

THIS

THIS being premis'd, the following Instance of the Opinion of Mr. LOCKE with regard to the Point we are upon, will appear to have its due Strength and Efficacy; and though but the Opinion of a *Man*, yet 'tis that of *such* a Man, that the World, if it has produc'd his *Equal*, has not (tho' he may not be altogether *perfect*) in any Age produc'd his *Superior* since the inspired Writers, for *Extent of Thought* and *Sublimity of Reasoning*; and with whom are not to be mention'd the *Muslroom Sceptics* that have sprung up since his time, who with the *narrow Souls* and *Conceptions of Pygmies in Sense*, pretend to measure the Capacities of a *Giant*, and to offer to us their *idle Dreams* for the Entertainment of our *waking Senses*.

THIS great Man was press'd, Letter after Letter, by his ingenious Friend Mr. MOLYNEUX, to give the World a *Treatise of Morality*, which Mr. LOCKE for some time, put him in hopes of complying with. But at length, as it appears, after the *most* Consideration, and having, as he informs him in one of his Letters, put down some Matters relating thereto, as they came into his Mind, he gives him * the following convincing Reason why he could not undertake that arduous Task.

“ THE Gospel, *says he*, contains so PERFECT
“ a Body of ETHICS, that REASON may
“ be excused from that Enquiry, since she may
“ find Man's Duty *clearer and easier* in REVE-
“ LATION, than in HERSELF.”

* P. 546. Vol. III. Fol. Edit.

AND this is the same great Man, who to the same excellent Friend, in Answer to a Compliment on his incomparable Writings, declares, in another private Letter, " That which makes
 " my Writings tolerable, *says he*, if any thing, is
 " only this, That I never write for any thing but
 " TRUTH, and never publish any thing to *others*,
 " which I am not *fully* persuaded of *myself*, and
 " do not think, that I *understand*.

LET the wilful Sceptics, who at the same time oppose to *Revelation* their own weak Reason, and Opinions *only* (and from whom therefore the Objection, would come with a very ill Grace) say, if they please, that this is no more than *human Authority*; and let them by so slight an Answer pass upon their own Sense, *determin'd* to remain unconvinc'd, a *seeming* Reason for their continued Infidelity; But let them not attempt to put this upon the *undoubting* Part of Mankind for a *sufficient* Reason, why *they* should renounce the *settled Faith* of their Ancestors: Let them give a Reason why, on a *due Comparison*, their *own Authority* and *meer Opinions*, ought to be preferr'd to those of Mr. LOCKE; and let them prove him to be in the wrong in what he asserts. Farthermore,

LET them prove, that *Reason* and *Revelation*, are incompatible with each other; and that the Gospel does not contain the *most excellent* System of *Morality* that ever was brought to Light: And let them also prove, that *before* the Gospel, a *more perfect* and *more eligible* Scheme of *Morality* was communicated to Mankind by the *Light of Nature*; or even that such a one is to be collected from the Writings of the Philosophers of
 all

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all Nations and of all Ages, put together, throughout the World from the *Beginning of Time* till the *Promulgation* of the Gospel: And by this Standard let them judge of their own *Scepticism*, and of the *Pretences* and *false Glosses* of such as would destroy *Revelation*, and on its Ruins build up the exploded or imperfect Notions of Philosophers, or their own still weaker and more imperfect Reason.

WE shall, in the next Place, produce some Arguments from Mr. LOCKE, in Defence of *Christianity*; and we single out this great Man, not only on the Account of his extraordinary *Merit* and *Sincerity*, but because many of our Free-thinkers pretend to found upon his admirable Writings those Notions which were abhorrent to his Faith and Principles, however he might be thought to differ in some * smaller Points from the generally received Opinions of his Time; which were it true that he did, gives greater Strength to the Arguments we shall extract from him; since neither *Superstition* nor *implicite Faith* could be imputed to him, and that he could not be influenc'd by what he thought an Error, tho' *establisht*.

* We are sensible, that Dr. HOLDSWORTH, and others, have, of late, since Mr. LOCKE's Death, taken much Pains to prove *Heterodoxy* in several Points on that great Genius: but tho' we think it easy to demonstrate, that they have strain'd the Point too much, and that their Arguments would not have been able to have stood against his powerful Pen; yet we shall only observe at present, that they have done the highest *Disservice*, in our humble Opinion, to the Cause they espouse with so much College-Warmth, by endeavouring to rob the *Orthodox World* of so glorious a *Champion* and *Ornament*; and by consigning him over to that Class of *Free-thinkers* and *Sceptics*, to which all his Writings manifestly demonstrate he was an Adversary.

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IN his excellent * Treatise, intitl'd, *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures*, he gives a kind of Historical Deduction of the *Life and Miracles* of our SAVIOUR, and brings irrefragable Proofs of his being the *Messiah*, and in many Places accounts, in the most plain and convincing Manner, for several of those Difficulties which are the Foundation of Mr. *Woolston's* execrable Railery against the *Miracles* of our Saviour, and which, if that Scoffer had attended to, would have prevented his *Scurrility*, and, in many Places, his *Blasphemy*, if he had not been predetermin'd, at all Adventures, as seems to have been the Case, to prosecute his Infidel Scheme.

WE shall first produce an Instance of the *Firmness* of Mr. *Locke's* Belief, in the *Doctrine and Miracles* of Christ. Page 490 of that Tract, he gives the Reason why our Saviour did not profess himself expressly, on several Occasions, to be the *Messiah*, but on the contrary, forbade his Disciples asserting him to be so, and says, " It was because
" the whole Nation of the *Jews*, expecting at this
" Time, their *Messiah*, and *Deliverance* by him
" from the Subjection they were in to a foreign
" Yoke, the Body of the People would certainly,
" upon the declaring himself to be the *Messiah* their
" King, have rose up in Rebellion, and set him at
" the Head of them.

" And indeed, says he, the *Miracles* that he did,
" so much dispos'd them to think him to be the
" *Messiah*, that tho' shrouded under the Obscurity
" of a mean Condition, and a very private simple

* Vide Vol. II. Fol. Edit. p. 471.

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“ *Life [which was so opposite to the Splendour in*
 “ *which they expected their Deliverer to appear]* tho’
 “ he pass’d for a *Galilæan* (his Birth at *Bethlehem*
 “ being then conceal’d) and assum’d not to himself
 “ any *Power and Authority*, or so much as the
 “ *Name of the Messiah*, yet he could hardly avoid
 “ being set up by a Tumult, and proclaim’d their
 “ King. This, *continues he*, was upon his feeding
 “ 5000 with five Barley-Loaves and two Fishes. So
 “ hard was it for him doing those *Miracles* which
 “ were necessary to testify his *Mission*, and which
 “ often drew great Multitudes after him, to keep
 “ the heady and hasty Multitude from such Dis-
 “ order, as would have involved him in it, and
 “ have *disturbed the Course* and *cut short the Time*
 “ of his *Ministry*, and drawn on him the *Reputa-*
 “ *tation and Death* of a turbulent seditious *Male-*
 “ *factor*, contrary to the *Design* of his *Coming*,
 “ which was to be offer’d up a *Lamb, blameless*
 “ and *void of Offence*, his *Innocence* appearing to
 “ *all the World*, even to *him* that deliver’d him up
 “ to be crucified. ”

THIS great Man did not think it enough to
 prove the Doctrines and Miracles of our Saviour
 conducive to the Ends of his Divine Mission: He
 goes farther, and proves, that the *Revelation* dis-
 pens’d by him, was confirmatory of the most exalted
Points of REASON, and that the *Belief and Worship*
 of ONE GOD among the *Jews*, in Opposition to
 the *Polytheism* of the antient Heathens, was owing
 likewise to *Revelation*: Whence it naturally results,
 that both *Jews and Infidels* (if their Quarrel
 be against the *Christian Revelation*, as such, and their
 Reliance only on what they call the *Religion of Na-*
ture) have as much Reason to renounce that *first*
Revelation, which taught them to worship only
one God, and so to turn *Idolaters and Heathens*, as

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they have to reject the *Second* introduced by *Jesus Christ*, which was an *Inforcement* and *Corroboration* of the *other*, and differ'd in nothing but dispensing a *more noble* and *perfect Morality*, and diffusing all over the *World* that Divine Knowledge of God which was before confined to a *despicable Corner* of the Earth, and to a *contemned People*, making the *Gentiles* Partakers of those Benefits which were first offered to the *Jews*, and *rejected by them*.

BUT let us hear our Author, who, * speaking of the *Imperfection* of the *Heathen Morality*, and of the *Light* of *unassisted Reason*, which had not been able to keep the *Generality* of Mankind from the grossest Idolatry, the Worship of many false Gods, says: "The Belief and Worship of *one God* was "the *National Religion* of the *Israelites alone* ; "and if we will consider it, it was introduced "and supported amongst the People by REVE- "EATION.

"THERE was no Part of Mankind, who had "quicker Parts, or improv'd them more, that had "a greater *Light* of REASON, or follow'd it farther, "in all Sorts of *Speculations*, than the *Athenians* ; "And yet we find but ONE SOCRATES amongst "them, that oppos'd and laugh'd at their *Poly- "theism*, and *wrong Opinions* of the *Deity* ; and "we see how they rewarded him for it. What- "soever PLATO and the soberest of the Philoso- "phers thought of the *Nature* and *Being* of the "ONE GOD, they were fain, in their *outward* "Professions and Worship, to go with the *Herd*, "and keep to the Religion establish'd by *Law* ; "which what it was, and how it had disposed

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“ the Minds of these quick-sighted Græcians, St.
 “ Paul tells us (*Acts xvii. 22 - 29.*)

“ YE Men of Athens, says he, I perceive that
 “ in all Things ye are too superstitious : For as I
 “ passed by and beheld your Devotions, I found an
 “ Altar with this Inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN
 “ GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship,
 “ HIM declare I unto you : GOD that made the
 “ World, and all Things therein, seeing that he is
 “ LORD of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in
 “ Temples made with Hands : Neither is worshipped
 “ with Mens Hands, as tho’ he needed any Thing,
 “ seeing he giveth unto all Life and Breath, and all
 “ Things, and hath made of one Blood all the Na-
 “ tions of Men, for to dwell on the Face of the Earth ;
 “ and hath determined the Times before appointed, and
 “ the Bounds of their Habitations ; That they should
 “ seek the LORD, if haply they might feel him out,
 “ and find him, tho’ he be not far from every one
 “ of us.

“ HERE he tells the Athenians, that they and
 “ the rest of the World, (given up to Superstition)
 “ what-ever Light there was in the Works of
 “ Creation and Providence to lead them to the
 “ TRUE GOD, yet they few of them found him.
 “ He was every where near them, yet they were
 “ but like People groping and feeling for some-
 “ thing in the Dark, and did not see him with
 “ a full and clear Day-light ; but thought the God-
 “ head like to Gold, and Silver, and Stone, graven by
 “ Art and Man’s Device.

“ IN this State of Darknes and Error, in re-
 “ ference to the TRUE GOD, our Saviour found
 “ the World : But the clear REVELATION
 “ he brought with him, dissipated this Dark-
 “ ness ;

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"ness; made the *One Invisible true God* known
 "to the World; and that with such *Evidence*
 "and *Energy*, that *Polytheism* and *Idolatry* hath
 "no more been able to withstand it: But
 "where-ever the Preaching of the Truth he de-
 "livered, and the Light of the Gospel hath
 "come, those Mists have been dispell'd. And,
 "in Effect, we see, that since our Saviour's
 "Time the *Belief of one God*, has prevail'd and
 "spread itself over the Earth. For even to the
 "Light that the *Messiah* brought into the World
 "with him, we must ascribe the Owning and
 "Profession of *One God* which the *Mahometan*
 "Religion had *derived* and *borrowed* from it.
 "So that in this Sense, it is certainly and ma-
 "nifestly true what St. *John* says of him; *For*
 "*this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that*
 "*he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* This
 "Light the World NEEDED, and this Light it
 "RECEIVED from HIM, That there is but ONE
 "GOD, and HE *Eternal, Invisible*, not like to
 "any *visible* Objects, not to be *represented* by
 "them.

"IF it be asked, whether the *Revelation* to the
 "Patriarchs by MOSES, did not teach *this*, and
 "why that was not enough? the Answer is ob-
 "vious: That however clearly the Knowledge of
 "One *Invisible God*, Maker of Heaven and Earth,
 "was revealed to them; yet that *Revelation* was
 "shut up in a little Corner of the World, amongst
 "a People by that very Law which they re-
 "ceiv'd with it, excluded from a *Commerce* and
 "Communication with the rest of Mankind. The
 "Gentle World in our Saviour's Time, and se-
 "veral Ages before, could have no Attestation
 "of the *Miracles* on which the *Hebrews* built
 "their Faith, but from the *Jews* themselves;
 "a People

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“ a People not known to the greatest Part of
“ Mankind, contemn'd and thought vilely of by
“ those Nations that did know them ; and there-
“ fore very *unfit* and *unable* to *propagate* the
“ Doctrine of ONE GOD in the World, and
“ *diffuse* it thro' the Nations of the Earth, by
“ the Strength and Force of that *ancient Reve-*
“ *lation*, upon which they had received it.”

By this our *modern Scoffers* and *Sceptics* will perceive, that they have the same Reason, as we observ'd above, to espouse *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*, as they have to reject the *Christian System* ; since the *Doctrine* and *Knowledge* of *One God* was founded upon REVELATION as well as *that*.

“ But our Saviour, *continues* Mr. LOCKE
“ *very excellently*, when He came, threw down
“ this Wall of *Partition*, and did not confine his
“ *Miracles* or *Message* to the Land of *Canaan*,
“ or the Worshippers of *Jerusalem*: But he him-
“ self *preached* at *Samaria*, and did *Miracles* in
“ the Borders of *Tyre* and *Sydon*, and before
“ Multitudes of People gather'd from all *Quar-*
“ *ters*. And after his *Resurrection* sent his Apo-
“ stles amongst the Nations, accompany'd with
“ *Miracles* ; which were done in all *Parts* so fre-
“ quently, and before so many Witnesses of all Sorts,
“ in broad *Day-light*, that, as I have before ob-
“ served, the *Enemies* of *Christianity* have never
“ dared to deny them ; no, not JULIAN himself,
“ who neither wanted *Skill* nor *Power* to inquire into
“ the *Truth* ; nor would have failed to have *pro-*
“ *claimed* and *exposed* it, if he could have *detected*
“ any *Falseness* in the *History* of the *Gospel*, or
“ found the *least Ground* to *question* the *Matter*
“ of *Fact*, publish'd of *Christ* and his *Apostles*.
“ The *Number* and *Evidence* of the *Miracles* done
“ by

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“ by our *Saviour* and his *Followers*, by the *Power*
 “ and *Force* of *Truth*, bore down this mighty and
 “ accomplish’d *Emperor*, and all his *Parts*, in
 “ his own *Dominions*. He durst not deny so plain
 “ *Matter of Fact*, which being granted, the *Truth*
 “ of our *Saviour’s Doctrine* and *Mission* unavoid-
 “ ably follows; notwithstanding whatsoever art-
 “ ful Suggestions his *Wit* could invent, or *Malice*
 “ should offer, to the contrary. ”

WHAT this Learned *Apostate Emperor* could
 not deny so many hundred Years nearer the *Time*
 of our *Saviour*, an *Apostate Clergyman*, equal to
 that *Prince* in nothing but his *Impiety* and *Blas-*
phemy, in a manner unbecoming a *Man of Letters*,
 even though it were the *absurdest* of the *Heathen*
Schemes, *ridicules* and *blasphemes*, without *Com-*
punction, in the *present Age*?

BUT leaving him for the present, let us apply
 the following noble Passages of our Author, in
 the same Treatise, to such as would set up *Mo-*
rality, and the *Religion of Nature* against the *Chri-*
stian System, and who would separate *Reason* from
Revelation, as *inconsistent* with each other, and so
 would use the *first*, to destroy the *last*, which is
 the Scheme of the present *Deists* and *Sceptics*: From
 which, joined with what we have already quoted
 from him, the *Superior Excellency* of the *Christian*
Dispensation will be manifested beyond all *Con-*
tradiction, by one of the sublimest Genius’s that
 our Nation has produced; who had made the
Study of the *Scriptures* the chosen *Employment* of
 his *riper Years*, and who had no *Worldly View* or
Interest to gratify, by the *Zeal* wherewith he
 espoused and vindicated, after the *strictest Examina-*
tion, and *most maturest Deliberation*, the *Faith* and *Mir-*
acles of *Christ*.

P. 532. he says, " So much Virtue as was
" necessary to hold *Societies* together, and to con-
" tribute to the *Quiet of Government*, the *Civil*
" *Laws* of Commonwealths taught [*In the Times*
" *before the Gospel*] and forced upon Men that
" lived under *Magistrates*: But these *Laws* being
" for the most Part made by such who had no
" other Aims but their *own Power*, reach'd no
" farther than those Things, that would serve to
" tie Men in *Subjection*; or at most were directly
" to conduce to the *Prosperity* and *temporal Hap-*
" *pinefs* of any People.

" BUT *Natural Religion*, in its full *Extent*, was
" no where, that I know of, taken Care of, by
" the Force of *natural Reason*. It should seem
" by the little that had *hitherto* been done in it,
" that 'tis too *hard a Task* for *unassisted Reason*, to
" establish *Morality* in *all its Parts* upon its *true*
" *Foundation*, with a *clear and convincing Light*.
" And 'tis, at least, a *surer and shorter Way*, to
" the *Apprehensions* of the *Vulgar*, and *Mass* of
" *Mankind*, that One manifestly sent from God, and
" coming with *visible Authority* from HIM,
" should, as a *King and Law-Maker*, tell them
" their *Duties* and require their *Obedience*, than
" leave it to the *long*, and, sometimes, *intricate*
" *Deductions* of *Reason*, to be made out to them.

" SUCH *Trains of Reasonings*, the *greatest Part*
" of *Mankind* have neither *Leisure* to weigh, nor,
" for Want of *Education* and *Use*, *Skill* to judge
" of."

WHAT is it then that our present Sceptics are
aiming to propagate? — Can *their System*, at
the *best*, be fit for any but *Scholars*? And in that

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Case,

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Case, What an *imperfect* Scheme of Religion must *that* be, that excludes the *Bulk* of Mankind from the *Knowledge* of it? Must not the *Generality* of the World, who are incapable of *making*, or perhaps of *comprehending*, those intricate *Deductions*, pin their Faith upon the *arbitrary Deductions* of those whose *Education* had given them more *Leisure* and *Skill* to make them? And would not this give Rise to a much more *wide*, a much more *enormous* and *uncertain* Faith, than that required by the *Christian Revelation*, which some of these *Reasoners* take such Pains to invalidate? — But let us pursue our Author.

“ WE see how unsuccessful in *THIS*, *says* he,
 “ the Attempts of Philosophers were *before* our
 “ SAVIOUR’s Time. How short their several
 “ Systems came of the Perfection of a *true* and
 “ *complete* Morality, is very visible: And if *since*
 “ that, the *Christian Philosophers* have much *out-*
 “ *done* them, yet we may observe, that the *first*
 “ Knowledge of the Truths they have added,
 “ are owing to REVELATION, tho’ as soon as
 “ they are *heard* and *considered*, they are found
 “ to be *agreeable* to REASON, and such as can by
 “ no means be *contradicted*.

“ EXPERIENCE shews, that the Knowledge
 “ of Morality, by *mere natural Lights* (how agree-
 “ able soever it be to it) makes but a *slow Pro-*
 “ *gress*, and *little Advance* in the World. And
 “ the Reason of it is not hard to be found in
 “ *Mens Necessities, Passions, Vices, and mistaken*
 “ *Interests*, which turn their Thoughts another
 “ Way: And the *designing Leaders*, as well as
 “ *following Herd*, find it not to their Purpose to
 “ employ much of their Time this Way: On
 “ whatever else was the Cause, ’tis plain in *Fact*,
 “ that

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“ that *Human Reason unassisted*, failed Men in its
 “ *great and proper Business of Morality*. It never
 “ from *unquestionable Principles*, by *clear De-*
 “ *ductions*, made out an *intire Body of the Law*
 “ *of Nature*. And he that shall collect all the
 “ *Moral Rules of the Philosophers*, and compare
 “ them with those contained in the *New Testament*,
 “ will find them to come short of the *Morality*
 “ delivered by our *Saviour*, and taught by his
 “ *Apostles*; a College made up for the most Part
 “ of *ignorant*, but *inspired Fishermen*. ”

If this be the Case, as certainly it is, what can those Men mean, who treat the *Scriptures* in *Gene-*
ral, and the *Gospel* in *particular*, with so much

Virulence and *Contempt*? What can be the Mean-
 ing of the *Multitude of Pamphlets and Books* written
 to distinguish away *Revelation*, in Favour of *Mo-*
rality and the *Law of Nature*, when they are intirely
 consistent with one another? Why is *Human Reason*
 opposed to *Divine Revelation*, and so many
 Learned Men set to quarrel about *Words*, when
 the *Christian Dispensation* so strongly requires, and
 unites them both, and they are corroborative of
 one another?

You have here before you, not only the *Opi-*
nion (theirs is all that our Adversaries offer to you)
 but the unanswerable *Arguments* of the greatest
 Genius of his Age, to whom the Leaders of the
 present *Scepticism*, if compar'd, as to *Perspicuity* and
 Force of their so much *Boasted Reasoning*, and to
sound Sense, *Sincerity*, *Affection to Truth* and *Learn-*
ing, are mere Men of Straw. He proves, That
Reason is so far from being impaired by *Revelation*,
 that it is exalted, and made perfect by it, and
 without it, was but a *blind and uncertain Guide* to
 Mankind.

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As the *Testimony* and *Arguments* of this admirable Author, are worth a thousand Evidences, because of his *Disinterestedness* in the Cause, as to *Worldly Views*, his *Capacity*, his *Diligence* to search after Truth, and the Contempt he had for even *establish'd* Errors of every kind, which he was so earnest to *combate* and *confute*, that the *Sceptics* have, tho' against all Cause, made a bold *Claim* to him, as *theirs*; which *Claim* many excellent Divines influenced by their *Prejudices*, and perhaps by an *undue Warmth* of Temper, have also too much favour'd; and as he was undoubtedly the greatest Friend to *Reason* and *Morality* that these latter Ages have produced; and, moreover, as this excellent Treatise of the *Reasonableness* of *Christianity*, can be but in few Hands, and, one would be tempted to think, (by the *Usage* he has received of *one Side*, and the *Claim* made to him on the *other*) in the *Knowledge* of Few; All these Things considered, I am sure I shall be indulged with another Quotation or two from him, on the Topics of *Reason*, *Natural Religion* and *Morality*, which are become such very *fashionable* Points of Controversy among the doughty Disputants of our Time.

IN the following Paragraph he puts the *Merits* of the *Heathen Morality* in the *strongest Light* that they can possibly appear in; and then argues with irresistible Force of *Reason*, on the *Necessity* there still remained for the *Gospel Revelation*, and demonstrates the *superior Excellency* of the *Christian Morality*.

“ If any one should think, *says he*, that out
 “ of the *Sayings* of the wise Heathens, *before* our
 “ Saviour's Time, there might be a *Collection*
 “ made of all those *Rules of Morality*, which are
 to

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“ to be found in the *Christian Religion*; yet this
 “ would not at all hinder, but that the *World*,
 “ nevertheless, stood as much in *Need* of our Sa-
 “ viour and the *Morality* delivered by HIM. Let
 “ it be granted, tho’ not true, that all the *moral*
 “ *Precepts* of the *Gospel* were known by somebody
 “ or other, amongst Mankind, before: But where,
 “ or how, or of what Use is not consider’d.

“ SUPPOSE they may be pick’d up here and
 “ there: Some from SOLON and BIAS in *Greece*;
 “ others from TULLY in *Italy*; and, to complete
 “ the Work, let * CONFUCIUS as far as *China*,
 “ be consulted; and † ANACHARSIS the *Scythian*
 “ contribute his Share: What will all this do, to
 “ give the *World* a complete *Morality*, that may
 “ be to Mankind the unquestionable *Rule* of *Life*
 “ and *Manners*?

“ I WILL not here urge the *Impossibility* of col-
 “ lecting from Men so far distant from one ano-
 “ ther in *Time*, and *Place*, and *Language*. I will
 “ suppose there was a || STOBÆUS in those Times,
 “ who had gather’d the *moral Sayings* from all the
 “ Sages of the *World*: What would this amount
 “ to, towards being a *steady Rule*, a *certain Tran-*
 “ *script* of a *Law* that we are under? Did the

* An excellent Philosopher, so much venerated by the *Chi-
 nese*, that the Popish Missionaries have not been able to proselyte
 any of those People to the Faith of Christ, but by blending his
 Morality with that of Christianity.

† He invented the Potter’s Wheel, went barefoot, despised
 Money, slept on the Ground; and was so temperate among the
 intemperate *Scythians*, that he gave Occasion to that Proverb,
 ANACHARSIS INTER SCYTHAS. He was wont to compare the
 Laws to Cobwebs, that caught poor Flies, but let the Wasps escape.

|| An antient Author of choice *Greek Sentences*, and two
 Books of *Eclogues*, one of *Physics*, and the other of *Ethics*.

“ Saying

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" Saying of * ARISTIPPUS or CONFUCIUS give
 " it an *Authority*? Was ZENO a Lawgiver to
 " Mankind? If not, what he, or any other Phi-
 " losopher deliver'd, was but a *Saying* of his.
 " Mankind might *bearken* to it, or *reject* it, as
 " they pleas'd, or as it suited their *Interests, Pas-*
 " *sions, Principles, or Humours.* They were under
 " no *Obligation*: The *Opinion* of *this* or *that* Phi-
 " losopher was of no *Authority*. And if it *were*,
 " you must take *all* he said under the *same* Cha-
 " racter. *All* his Dictates must go for Law, cer-
 " tain and true, or *none* of them: And then, if
 " you will take any of the moral Sayings of EPI-
 " CURUS (many whereof SENECA quotes with
 " Esteem and Approbation) for Precepts of the
 " *Law of Nature*, you must take *all* the rest of
 " his Doctrine for such too, or else his *Authority*
 " ceases. So no more is to be received from him,
 " or any of the Sages of old, for *Parts* of the
 " *Law of Nature*, as carrying with it an *Obliga-*
 " *tion* to be obey'd, but what they prove to
 " be so.

HERE the Reader will allow us to infer, That
 if the Precepts and Opinions of CONFUCIUS,
 ZENO, BIAS, ANACHARSIS, EPICURUS, SOLON,
 TULLY, SENECA, &c. *all collected together*, would
 form so imperfect a System of Morality, how much
 less Dependance can be made on the *Atheistical* and
Deistical Schemes which are now endeavour'd to be
 propagated by Men so infinitely inferior to any
 of them?

" BUT such a *Body of Ethics*, (*continues our*
 " *Author*) proved to be the *Law of Nature* from

* A Cyprian Philosopher, who used the Pleasures he had,
 and despised those he had not.

" Principles

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" Principles of Reason, and reaching all the Du-
ties of Life, I think no-body will say, the
World had, before our Saviour's Time.

YET this, we cannot but observe, is the same Law, and the same Saviour, that are become the Subject of the profane Scoffs and Banter of the Infidels of this enlighten'd Age!

" 'Tis not enough, continues Mr. LOCKE,
that there were up and down scatter'd Sayings
of wise Men, conformable to right Reason: The
Law of NATURE is the Law of CONVENIENCE
too; and 'tis no wonder, that those Men of
Parts and studious of Virtue, who had occasion
to think on any particular Part of it, should,
by Meditation light on the right, even from the
observable Convenience and Beauty of it, without
making out its Obligation from the true Prin-
ciples of the Law of Nature, and Foundation of
Morality.

" BUT these incoherent Apotbegms of Philoso-
phers and wise Men, however excellent in them-
selves, and well-intended by them, could never
make a Morality whereof the World could be
convinced; could never rise to the Force of a
Law that Mankind could with Certainty de-
pend on.

" WHATSOEVER should thus be universally use-
ful, as a Standard to which Men should conform
their Manners, must have its Authority either
from REASON or REVELATION.

" HE that any one will pretend to set up as
a Lawgiver to Mankind, and to have his Rules
pass for authentic Directions, must shew, that
either

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“ either he builds his Doctrine upon Principles of
 “ REASON, *self-evident* in *themselves*, and that he
 “ deduces all the Parts of it from thence, by *clear*
 “ and *evident* Demonstration; or must shew his
 “ Commission from HEAVEN, that he comes with
 “ Authority from GOD, to deliver his Will and
 “ Command to the World. In the former Way,
 “ no-body, that I know, before our Saviour’s
 “ Time, ever did, or went about to give us a
 “ Morality.

“ ’Tis true, there is a *Law of Nature*; but
 “ who is there that ever did, or undertook to give
 “ it us all *intire*, as a *Law*, no *more* nor no *less*
 “ than what was contain’d in, and had the *Obligation*
 “ of that *Law*? Who ever made out *all*
 “ the *Parts* of it, put them *together*, and shew’d
 “ the World their *Obligation*? Where was there
 “ any such *Code*, that Mankind might have *Recourse*
 “ to, as their *unerring* Rule, before our
 “ Saviour’s Time? If there was *not*, ’tis plain,
 “ there was NEED of one to give us *such a Morality*,
 “ *such a Law*, which might be the sure Guide
 “ of those who had a Desire to go right,— and
 “ might be certain when they had *perform’d*, when
 “ *fail’d* in their *Duty*.

“ *Such a Law of Morality* JESUS CHRIST
 “ hath given us in the *New Testament*; but by the
 “ latter of those Ways, by REVELATION. We
 “ have from HIM a *full* and *sufficient* Rule for our
 “ Direction, and *conformable* to that of REASON.
 “ But the *Truth* and *Obligation* of its *Precepts* have
 “ their *Force*, and are *past* Doubt to us, by the
 “ Evidence of his *Mission*. HE WAS SENT BY
 “ GOD: HIS MIRACLES shew it; and the *Authority*
 “ of GOD in his *Precepts* cannot be *question’d*.

“ HERE

“ HERE Morality has a *sure* Standard, that
“ REVELATION *vouches*, and REASON cannot
“ *gainsay*, nor *question* ; but BOTH TOGETHER
“ witness to come from God the great *Law-maker*.
“ And such an one as *This* out of the *New Testa-*
“ *ment*, I think the World never had, nor can any
“ one say is any where else to be found.”

THIS great Author pursues the Argument in an equally strong and advantageous Manner ; but this is enough for our present Purpose, and I content myself to refer to the Piece itself, those Gentlemen who are not so far gone in Infidelity, but that they would be glad to have *Reason* to approve of the Faith and Religion of their Forefathers,

WITH regard to such as are so much farther gone in Infidelity, that they can join in *blaspheming* and *ridiculing* the *Miracles* of *Christ*, the *Divinity* of his *Person*, and the *Doctrines* of *Christianity*, I would only observe, by the way, that as in this Treatise this excellent Author lays the Stress of our Salvation altogether on our FAITH in *Christ Jesus*, I would, if Mr. LOCKE be worthy to be attended to in Opposition to Mr. WOOLSTON and his *Brethren*, refer to their serious Consideration, what a terrible Case they must be in, who *renounce* and *despise* the ONLY Means by which they can be saved ; and what must become of their poor immortal Souls, if the Doctrines of the Gospel (which after all their impious Endeavours, they *cannot prove* to be *false*) should prove *true* !

I AM persuaded, that I need say very little more to convince the Minds of such as are not wilfully prejudiced, and have any Remains of Candour and Ingenuity ; and as I would avoid

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running

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running into too great a Length, so I shall only extract from Mr. ADDISON's *Evidences* of the *Christian Religion*, lately publish'd, some Proofs from *Pagan* and other Authors, of the Truth of the Gospel Dispensation; and then conclude.

THIS Task we shall perform in a summary Manner, and leave it to the Consideration of all our Readers; many of whom, we are persuaded, will be agreeably surpriz'd to see that, considering the *Distance of Time*, and other Circumstances, *so much* can be produced in Confirmation of this important Argument.

TACITUS, Suetonius, and Dion, Heathen Authors who lived in or near the Time of our Saviour, mention the Tax laid upon the *Roman Empire*, by *Augustus Cæsar*, which the Scripture takes Notice of as the Occasion of *Joseph* and the Blessed Virgin's going to *Bethlehem*.

CHALCIDIUS records the Appearance of the New Star which conducted the *Wise Men*.

MACROBIUS and sundry other Historians mention the Slaughter of the Children by *Herod*.

CELSUS, that great Enemy of Christianity, admits, that our Saviour had been in *Egypt*, and pretends that he learn'd Magic there.

TACITUS informs us, that *Pontius Pilate* was Governor of *Judæa*, and that *Jesus* was brought in Judgment before him, and by him condemned and crucified.

JULIAN the *Apostate*, PORPHYRY and HIEROCLES, all Persecutors of the Christians, confess, that many

many miraculous Cures, and Miracles, out of the ordinary Course of Nature, were wrought by him.

PHLEGON, in his Annals, as *Origen* assures us, attests, that our Saviour foretold several Things which came to pass according to his Prediction; and records, that at the Time of our Saviour's Death, there was a miraculous Darkness and a great Earthquake.

PLINY the Younger, about 70 Years after the Death of Christ, relates, That *Jesus* was worshipped as a God among the Christians: That they would rather suffer Death than blaspheme him: That they received a Sacrament, and by it enter'd into a Vow of abstaining from Sin and Wickedness: That they had private Assemblies of Worship, and used to join together in Hymns: Which Account agrees in all its Circumstances with the Accounts we have in Holy Writ of the first State of Christianity.

JULIAN the Apostate never offer'd to deny the Miracles and wonderful Works performed by St. *Peter*; but attributes them to a Book of Magical Secrets left him by our Saviour.

PORPHYRY objects to Christianity, that since *Jesus* had begun to be worshipped, *Æsculapius* and the rest of the Gods did no more converse with Men: which shews, that the Devils or evil Spirits were subject to them, according to what had been predicted.

CELSUS, who could not run the Lengths of *Woolston*, tho' a bitter and avow'd Enemy of the Christian Religion, attributes those Miracles, which the latter denies and ridicules, to *Art Magic*; and so falls into the Absurdity of the *Jews*, That our Saviour cast out Devils by *Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*.

THESE are Authorities and Testimonies of Pagan Authors, and some of them Persecutors of Christianity. To which may be added a flagrant Testimony from an Author, who being once an Heathen, was converted by the Force of what he heard and saw, to the Christian Faith. This was QUADRATUS, a famous *Athenian* Philosopher, who lived within 60 Years of our Saviour's Crucifixion, and wrote an Apology for Christianity, which was highly esteemed by the most learned *Athenians*: which Apology was extant in the Time of *Leo Viennensis*, Anno 870. This Author, after having shewn that false Miracles were generally wrought in Obscurity, and before few or no Witnesses, speaking of those wrought by our Saviour, has the following Passage:— “ But His Works
 “ were always *seen*, because they were *true*: They
 “ were seen by those who were *healed*, and by those
 “ who were *raised* from the *Dead*. Nay, these
 “ Persons who were thus *healed* and *raised*, were
 “ seen not only *at the Time* of their being *healed* and
 “ *raised*, but long *afterwards*. Nay, they were
 “ seen not only all the while our Saviour was *upon*
 “ *Earth*, but *survived* after his *Departure* out of this
 “ World; nay, some of them were living in *our*
 “ Days.” *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, p. 21.

JUSTIN MARTYR, about 100 Years after Christ, in his Disputes with the Heathen Philosophers, in Presence of the Emperor, and the whole Roman Senate, appeals for the Truth of Christ's Miracles to the Record of *Pontius Pilate*, which he transmitted to *Rome* after the Examples of other Governors of Provinces, and which contained all the Memorable Transactions that happen'd in the Time of his Government: And this he appeals to as a Record then *public* and *extant*; which he durst not have done, especially in so august

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august a Presence, if his learned Adversaries could have contradicted him. And there is much more Reason to believe, That more excellent and important Pieces have been lost, besides this noble Record, on the Side of Christianity, than on the other Side; especially when it is considered, that all the Powers of the Earth were combin'd to *persecute*, and even to *extirpate* the Faith of Christ, and that the Rulers of the World continued Pagan for almost 300 Years after the Promulgation of the Gospel.

THE same excellent Author farther observes, That it happen'd very providentially for the Honour of the Christian Religion, that it did not take its Rise in the *dark, illiterate* Ages of the World: But at a Time when *Arts and Sciences* were at their *Height*. And 'tis observable, that it had very early, many illustrious Converts to it, who no doubt examin'd strictly, and were thoroughly satisfy'd of the Truth of our Saviour's History. Three of the earliest, were JOSEPH of *Arimathæa*, a Member of the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, DIONYSIUS one of the *Athenian Areopagus*, and FLAVIUS CLEMENS, a Senator, and even Consul of *Rome*. And TERTULLIAN tells the *Roman* Governors, That their Corporations, Councils, Armies, Tribes, Companies, the Palace, the Senate, and Courts of Judicature, were filled with Christians.

ARNOBIUS also asserts, That Men of the finest Parts and Learning, Orators, Grammarians, Rhetoricians, Lawyers, Physicians, Philosophers, despising the Sentiments they had been fond of, took up their Rest in the Christian Religion; and that, no doubt, upon the *fullest Conviction* of the *Truth* of it.

EVERY one of these, in those *Primitive* Times of Christianity took for granted the Truth of those
Evan-

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Evangelical Narratives, which *now* (so many Centuries *afterwards*) are become the prophane *Jests* and *Ridicule* of *Apostates* and *Scoffers*. And many of these must be even *Eye-Witnesses* of the Efficacy of the *Apostles* Preaching, and of the *Miracles* with which they supported the Doctrines they taught. For who could refuse their *Belief* in the *Miracles* of *Christ*, when they saw those who attested the Truth of them, performing themselves *like Miracles* to those they testify'd of?

'TIS an Observation of IRENÆUS very apposite to our Purpose, in proving the *unerring* and *immutable* Truth of the Christian System, and the faithful Relations of the four Evangelists, that those barbarous Nations, who had at first only learned the History of our Saviour from those who had converted them to Christianity *before* the Gospels were *written*, had among them the *same* Accounts of our Saviour, which they afterwards met with in the *four Evangelists*. An uncontestable Proof of the *Harmony* and Concurrence between the *Holy Scripture* and the *Tradition* of the *Churches* in those *early Times* of Christianity; and what must have contributed not a little to make way for the *universal Reception* of the *Holy Gospels*.

THE cruel *Deaths* and exquisite *Tortures* which the Primitive Martyrs suffer'd, rather than renounce the Faith of *Jesus*, and be guilty of the least *Hypocrisy*, or *mental Reservation*, which perhaps they might have lived to repent of, and be forgiven for, is another strong Proof of the Truth of that Religion, which *alone* could inspire the illustrious Sufferers with Hopes sufficient to counterballance that strange Variety of exquisite Tortures which they so magnanimously endured.

“ FOR my Part, says this excellent Author, when
“ I consider that it was not an unaccountable
Obstinacy

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“Obstinacy in a *single Man*, or in any particular
 “*Set of Men*, in some extraordinary *Juncture*;
 “but that there were *Multitudes of each Sex*, of
 “every *Age*, of different *Countries and Conditions*,
 “who, for near 300 *Years together*, made this
 “glorious *Confession of their Faith*, in the midst of
 “*Tortures*, and in the *Hour of Death*; I must
 “conclude, that they were either of another
 “*Make* than *Men* are at present; or that they
 “had such *miraculous Supports* as were peculiar
 “to those *Times of Christianity*, when without
 “them, perhaps, the very *Name of it* might
 “have been *extinguished*.”

AND thus, here is another *Difficulty* for the
 Despisers of Faith and Miracles to account for
 on the Foot of their *boasted Reason*, and in their
 present *Way of Thinking*.

WE might say still much more, and did intend
 to add to the preceding *Evidences of the Christian*
Religion from Mr. LOCKE and Mr. ADDISON,
 some farther *Proofs in Confirmation thereof* from
 those great Philosophers Mr. BOYLE and Sir ISAAC
 NEWTON; but we are induc'd to believe, that
 we have said enough to convince an ingenuous
 Mind; and all the Evidence that could be farther
 brought, will not be sufficient to move the Minds
 of such as are determined against Conviction.

WE shall however observe, That 'tis well
 known, that every one of those four Gentlemen
 were Adversaries to *Enthusiasm and Superstition*,
 and broke through the *Prejudices of Education*,
 and struck out *New and Surprising Lights*,
 (especially Mr. LOCKE, Mr. BOYLE and Sir
 ISAAC NEWTON) in all the Branches of *Philosophy*;
 and yet all their *extensive Discoveries*, and the
 Effects of their *boundless Enquiries*, serv'd them
 for

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for no other Purpose (for they were *Modest* as well as *Great Men*; which, by the Way, are Qualities in a manner inseparable) than to increase their *Faith*, and strengthen their *Belief* of the *Mysteries* of *Providence*, and of the *Truth* of the *Christian Revelation*.

By the *much* they knew, they found there was *much more* still to be known; and this taught them that *Humility* with regard to *themselves*, and that *Submission* with regard to *Providence*, which are the great and constant Attendants of Noble and Capacious Minds; two Qualities, which, how much the *Sceptics* and *Infidels* of the present Age, are wanting in, let their *Works*, and their *Conversations* speak.

YET 'tis farther observable, that every one of these Gentlemen were *Laymen*, and so could not be suspected to be in a Plot to promote that *Priestcraft* which it is so much the Fashion of our present *Ridiculers* of the *Christian Faith*, to cry out upon, and to which they senselessly impute every *serious Attempt* to promote the Honour of *God* and *Religion*.

I SHALL Conclude, with earnest Prayers, that what I have offer'd in so plain, so intelligible, and, as I hope, so *Rational* a Manner, may be attended with such Success, that if it does not convince the *hardn'd* Minds of *some*, it may however confirm the *doubting* Minds of others, and inspire them with a due Belief of, and Reverence for, that Sacred Dispensation, which will appear to every *unprejudic'd Enquirer*, to be so wisely calculated to promote our Happiness both in *this World*, and in *that to come*!

F I N I S.



POSTSCRIPT.

IN Compliance with the Request of a valuable Friend, who is Father of a numerous Family, and has been particularly affected by the following melancholy Letter, we insert it here. It was publish'd in one of the Weekly Papers in *September* last; and contains an Account of a Case that seems a *Second* to that of the unhappy Gentleman in the *Temple*, which we hinted at p. 22. who, unable to contend with the shocking Uncertainties that his Deistical Acquaintance had involved him in, laid violent Hands on himself to experience the Certainty of those Truths which he had been taught to question.

S I R,

IAM a constant Reader of your Papers, and like them very well, and am, above all Things, satisfied with those excellent Pieces in them that so pathetically represent the *Decay of Religion and Morality* amongst us in this Age; and I assure you, if a Stop be not put to the Corruption both of *Principles and Practices* which now prevail among the *younger Sort*, that I firmly believe, Heaven, by some heavy Judgments, will interpose, and work our Reformation; for there's no correcting and reforming of *Nations*, when their Iniquities are *full*, but in this Way.

H

THERE

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THERE is no Man living upon the Face of the Earth hath so much Reason to complain of this as I have, — and I am persuaded that you will join Issue with me in the following Account.

I HAD a Son, who was always brought up under my Eye; in Religion and Learning he made an equal Progress; he was a Comfort to his Parents, and a Credit to our Minister, who instructed him. All that examined him declared, that his Judgment in Things was solid beyond his Years, and that he had Learning, without its Attendants in our public Places of Literature at this Day, *viz.* Vice and Immorality.

I WAS over-persuaded to put him in the *Temple*, where he had continued almost a Year; he came down in the Vacation Time to see us; but I found a strange Alteration in him as to Religion; he had entirely lost that *Seriousness* in it that he had from his Infancy; he lay in Bed on Sundays commonly 'till Noon, and I found that it was with a Kind of Reluctancy he went to Church but once a Day, and was become extremely backward to read Prayers in the Family, which he did before with the greatest Fervency and Zeal; at which I was much disturb'd.

TERM-Time returning, he dutifully took his Leave of me and his Mother, and return'd to his Chambers. But he had scarce been a Month there, before I was sent for to receive his last Breath. I made, upon the receiving this afflicting Account, ready immediately for my Journey; and indeed when I came to *London*, I found him delirious and senseless, — the Surgeon with him, who, by Order of the Physician, had open'd a Vein in each Arm; for his Distemper was a violent burning Fever,

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Fever, attended with a Pleurisy. Next Morning he came to himself; whereupon, to keep him from the Noise of Company, I got him removed to a Friend's House.

WHEN he was settled in a convenient Chair, I sat down by him; then he fell upon my Face and wept; after he had given a Vent to his Tears, he spoke thus; Oh! if the Minister, my Master, was here, I would open my Mind to him, for the *Flame* of my *Conscience* is more violent than that of my *Fever*; but since he is not, therefore, — saith he, — I will act the sincere Part of the repenting Prodigal with you.

You must imagine that the Address surprized me, but the Tendernefs of a Father gave Way to it, expecting that what he had to say might be grounded upon the Remifsness in the Duties of Religion, which I observed in him, as I have told you.

BUT, alas! the Case was quite otherwise! — he made a Confession to me that I never expected. —
 “ Father, — I must, to my Confusion, own, —
 “ that I have been a *Deist* since I came here.
 “ I stood it out, it is true, for a Month, —
 “ but my Companions brought me *Barborack's*
 “ Prefatory Introduction to *Puffendorf's* Law of
 “ Nature and Nations, and from thence argued,
 “ that Christian Religion, now profess'd, was no
 “ more but the *Comments* of the *Fathers*, who
 “ at best were but a Pack of *Enthusiasts*, *Per-*
 “ *secutors*, *Immoral*, *Ignorant*, and *Sanguinary*
 “ Villains! and that *Pythagoras*, *Tbales*, *Anaxa-*
 “ *goras*, &c. and above all, that * *Confucius*, the

* How excellently has Mr. LOCKE confuted this profane Plea, in the Passages we have quoted from him P. 44, 45?

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“ *Chinese* Philosopher, had more Religion and
 “ Morality than all the Fathers put together. —
 “ At last they jested on the *Trinity*, and on the
 “ *Incarnation* of the *Son of God*, as the Effects
 “ of the Holy Fathers *Enthusiasm* and *Stupidity*.

“ AND what above all took most with me,
 “ was a rigid *Dissenter*’s saying, That there was
 “ nothing in Religion : As for his Part, he’d
 “ form himself into that *Shape* by the which
 “ he thought he should get most *Practice* in the
 “ Law.

“ HAVING, by these Arguments, given the
 “ Loofe to my former Principles, I enter’d into
 “ all the Measures of *Excess* with them ; the
 “ *Consequence* of which is my present Distemper.”
 He had scarce ended this most astonishing Account
 to me, but that his Pleurisy return’d, and again
 he was blooded, and to the next Morning he
 open’d not his Mouth.

HOWEVER, in a few Weeks he recovered so
 much Strength as to go by easy Journeys into
 the Country : where I got, to his Desire, the
 Fathers, and best Commentaries on the Bible,
 from which he made Collections upon most of
 the *moral Virtues*, and concluded, that there could
 be no inward Peace, without a saving Knowledge
 of them, as contained in the *Scriptures*, together
 with the *Comments* of the *Fathers* on them in the
first Ages of the Church, — and almost was always
 a-weeping, for Fear God had cast him off for his
 Degeneracy.

ONE Day, in the Summer-house, as he turn’d
 his Eye upon *Salvoian*, he said, — “ Honour’d
 “ Father, — I think the State of this Nation is
 “ very

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“ very much like that of the *Romans*, when the
 “ *Goths* and *Vandals* subdued them ; they *profess’d*
 “ Christianity, yet, in the mean Time, they made
 “ a *Jest* of every Virtue it enjoyn’d ; — for
 “ which, *saiſt he*, God diſown’d them ſo far, —
 “ that they became tame Slaves to thoſe barbarous
 “ People to whom before they would not vouch-
 “ ſafe the Honour of *Alliance* or of *Peace*.

FROM the Summer-houſe we went into the Hall ; but he no ſooner ſat down, but that a tickling Cough ſeiz’d him, which gradually encreaſed ’till it came to the higheſt Degree of Vehemence, and at laſt by it there broke an Ulcer in his Lungs, which immediately ſtrangled or ſuffocated him. To mention my Grief is needleſs. God only knows how great it is ! — I only write this for the Warning of others, — eſpecially to *young Students of the Law*, — that they may not be the Cauſe of ſo great Sorrow to their Parents in this corrupt Age as my Son hath been to his tender Mother and me.

I am, &c.

W. B.

THE Degeneracy of a hopeful Son, juſt at the Time when the indulgent Parent was expecting to reap the Fruits of the good Seeds he had ſo carefully ſown in his Mind, and which, as he flatter’d himſelf, he had already perceived beginning to bloſſom out to the Honour of his Name and Family, is certainly one of the moſt melancholy and affecting Trials that can happen to human Nature. Such tender Parents, as are wont to watch with Transport the beautiful Dawn of the Morning of Life in their Childrens Minds, and to pleaſe themſelves with the hopeful Proſpect ariſing from thence of the Reſplendency of their fuller Day of Manhood, can beſt account for the Pangs that muſt torture and rack the Soul of the good Father, who having ſafely conducted his Child by the Hand from helpleſs Infancy through the firſt dangerous Years of Youth, beholds him at laſt, by the Force of evil Examples, ſeduced from his Duty, and making a Forfeit of his Virtue and Religion at his firſt Entrance into
 (what

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(what we may call) *Independent Life*. This is a Case that cannot possibly be described; and we shall leave it on the Reflexion of all such as are the Occasions of so terrible and truly diabolical a Seduction, what they must have to answer for, both to God and to their Fellow-Creatures, on this Account: A Reflexion that one time or other, (and, perhaps, when they are least prepared to support it) will probably find them out, and fill their Minds with insupportable Anguish.

BUT there is one thing more, that we must take notice of, however reluctantly, relating to the Principles of some of the Gentlemen to whose Care the Education of Youth is intrusted at the Universities. 'Tis indeed with great Regret, that we are obliged to mention any thing that may be supposed to reflect Dishonour upon those famous Seminaries of Learning, for which we have all imaginable Deference and Veneration: But it is too true, and so notorious, that it cannot be concealed, That even THERE, at the Fountain-head, our Youth too often receive those early Taints of Infidelity, which make them susceptible of that Infection which afterwards overspreads their whole Minds.

WE but just mention this deplorable Truth, in order to recommend it, which we do with all possible Earnestness, to the serious Consideration of all Fathers and Guardians who have at Heart the Honour of God and Religion, and the future Welfare and Happiness of their Children and Wards, that they thoroughly satisfy themselves in Relation to the *unsuspected Soundness* of the Tutor's *Christian Principles*. It ought not to be thought sufficient that such a one contents himself to be accounted a *mere Moral Man*: For tho' the Ties of *Morality*, join'd with Motives from *common Prudence*, may be able to withhold Him, in his *College-Life*, from open Scandals, yet they may not be strong enough for the *Young Gentleman*, when, stimulated, perhaps, by *violent Appetites*, and supported by *plentiful and insinuating Circumstances*, he is permitted to launch out into a World abounding with Temptations and Dangers, which require all the Hold that Religion can take on his Passions of *Hope* and *Fear*, to controul and withstand. But as I intend this only for a Caution, which I am sorry I am obliged to think necessary, I shall say no more of it in this Place.

T H E E N D.



